

VOICES OF MENINGITIS™

A Meningococcal Disease Prevention Campaign
from the National Association of School Nurses

In collaboration with sanofi pasteur

Meningitis Prevention in Summer Camps Get the Facts

The National Association of School Nurses' *Voices of Meningitis* campaign urges parents to learn about meningococcal disease, a rare, but serious infection that can cause meningitis and take the life of a child in just a single day.

While meningitis is rare, certain staples of summer – living in close quarters at overnight camp or other activities that bring large groups of preteens and teens together for prolonged periods of time – can put even healthy kids at risk for getting the disease

Camp is a special place for children filled with a lifetime of memories, and children don't get meningitis simply by attending camp. But, it is important to be aware of the disease so you can ask your children's health-care provider about vaccination to help them stay healthy all summer long.

- Get your child vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis before heading off to camp. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health officials recommend preteens and teens 11 through 18 years of age and college freshmen living in dormitories be vaccinated against meningococcal disease. Vaccination is safe and effective and the best way to help prevent the disease.
- Confirm whether the camp has onsite health-care professionals. Meningitis symptoms can be difficult to recognize, especially in early stages, since they can be similar to flu-like symptoms. Having direct access to a health-care professional, like a camp nurse, can help ensure your child receives prompt medical treatment.
- Be aware of the tell-tale signs of meningitis. A person with meningococcal disease may have some or all of the following symptoms, but they may not occur at the same time: severe headache, stiff neck, high fever, nausea and vomiting, confusion, sensitivity to light, and a purplish rash.
- Write information about your child's medical conditions and/or allergies on the camp's health history form. You should also tell the camp nurse if your child has any medical conditions or allergies. It is also important to inquire about immunization requirements and provide emergency contact information.
- Meningococcal bacteria can enter the body through the nose and mouth, so your child should avoid sharing glasses, eating utensils, and water bottles — anything that someone has put in or near their mouth.
- Teach your child safe cough and sneeze procedures by coughing and sneezing into his or her sleeve. Meningococcal bacteria, and many other illnesses, can be spread from one person to another through direct contact with respiratory secretions (e.g., coughing, sneezing).
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep. Being tired can weaken the immune system, which may make preteens and teens more prone to meningitis. If your child is attending overnight camp, contact the camp director to find out the "lights out" time.

Visit www.VoicesOfMeningitis.org for more information on meningococcal meningitis and vaccination.

*Voices of Meningitis is a program of the National Association of School Nurses in collaboration with sanofi pasteur
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